

SECRET

July 7, 1962 - Saturday

We left this morning from Waterloo by train to stay with the Bessboroughs at Stansted Park, near Havant. The Bessboroughs' country seat was in Ireland, but was burned during Black and Tan days. Fortunately, some of the furniture and pictures were saved. Eric's father then bought this property. Originally, it was the home of the Lumley family, of whom Lord Scarbrough is a descendant. After various alterations and re-building, the house was burned down in 1900, only a Georgian portion of the structure remaining. When Lord Bessborough acquired it, the original mansion had been replaced. The grounds were laid out by Capability Brown. I have seldom seen finer trees or planting. There is a wonderful early chapel, various pavilions, and ~~some~~ gatehouse dependencies. Eric having been successful in independent television ventures, has installed a heated swimming pool near one wing. It serves as a focus ^{for} ~~the~~ family activity. Near it are flats in the old stables, fitted up for permanent occupancy by the Peter Thorneycrofts and others. There are two studios in the house. Carla Thorneycroft, who is part American, part Italian and English, is a charming woman. Peter paints bravely away during weekends; he is now producing murals for a restaurant in London.

There is not a cloud in the sky, and we had a glorious afternoon. After drinks, the we went off to Chichester Festival Theatre, a remarkable modern edifice in which Eric is deeply interested, and for which he raised ~~some~~ ^{much} of the funds. Sir Laurence Olivier is its Director. There we met the architect, the Mayor, and any number of patrons, actors and actresses, including the talented Sir Michael Redgrave. Olivier's wife, Joan Plowright, had one of the chief parts in "The Chances". This play by Beaumont and Fletcher, adapted by the Duke of Buckingham, has not been put on for many years. The costuming was perfect, the acting excellent, though the

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After a stint at the office, E and I went to Golders Green Crematorium, for Bowler's funeral, a melancholy event.

We left this afternoon by train for Oxford, whence we motored over to Blenheim for tonight's party. This ^{colossal} ~~house~~ house, with its magnificent grounds, is probably one of the few in England in which the almost 1500 guests expected this evening could be contained. Lady Sarah Russell, Bert Marlborough's daughter, should have been in a frenzy as cars rolled up almost in a continuous stream, some discharging guests who, like ourselves, were to spend the night in the house, and others coming to ask where they might be lodged in the neighborhood. One group of twenty young Americans, having sent no advance notice whatever, called on her to find them billets for the night. She must have great executive ability, for she seemed to handle these vexatious requests with efficiency and calm.

E and I had a large bedroom, dressing room, and bath upstairs. Shortly after we arrived, Alexandre, the famous Paris hairdresser, with his assistant, ^{the bedroom} preempted ~~the~~ for most of the afternoon. His first customer was Jacqueline de Ribes, famed for being one of the best dressed women in Europe, but one of the most exacting when it comes to the arrangement of her coiffure. Despite Alexandre being expected to attend to many other people, she detained him for almost two hours. Other ladies walked in and out to have their hair combed by the great expert. It was all very amusing. One of them was the Russells' daughter, Serena, for whom the party was being given. I thought her sweet and attractive.

Things really got under way when Bert Marlborough gave a dinner for the house guests at eight o'clock. I have never eaten ^{better} ~~lobster~~ broiled lobster. I sat between Sarah Russell and Gloria Guinness. The latter, another of the best dressed women, is a Mexican, and most appealing, as is Sarah.

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